

# **Exercising Outsourced DR Services**

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# Summary

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- *The approach to exercising outsourced Disaster Recovery(DR) services is very different to exercising internal DR Plans or Business Continuity Plans.*
- *Greater attention is placed on business relationships with service providers, clients and service outcomes.*

# Manitoba Workplace Technology Services

- Manitoba has robust **Disaster Recovery** in place within a core agreement involving Workplace Technology Services. DR Services are in scope for:
  - Messaging *Services* (Outlook/Exchange)
  - Storage *Services* (Network drives)for vast majority of Government of Manitoba users.
- This DR capability is exercised annually, under a service agreement with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party provider

# DR Service Objectives

In case of a disaster/emergency affecting availability, services are to be recovered as follows:

Service	RTO*	RPO
Messaging (Outlook)	2 hours	30 minutes
Storage (Network drives)	8 hours	24 hours

\* following the time of Disaster declaration

- Equal in capacity to current production environment
- Decreased service reliability resulting from less fault tolerance/redundancy

# Common DR Exercise Objectives

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## Focus on service

- Engage end users to perform validation and assess their experience of consuming the in-scope services
- End user validation of *recovered* and *restored* services
- Meet contracted recovery objectives (RTO and RPO)

# Managing Outsourced DR Services

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Involves:

- Higher degree of abstraction from technology
- Precision wording in IT service agreements and subsequent contract management practices
- More focus on relationship management involving building trust, mutual respect, honesty and communication with service provider and client
- Less focus on technical capability and more focus on obtaining indication of vendor's DR service delivery capability and user experience of delivered services (based on IT service agreement)
- More focus on adherence to defined standards of functional and non-functional requirements

# Differences in DR Service Exercises

<b>DR PLAN exercise evaluates:</b>	<b>DR SERVICE exercise evaluates:</b>
Effectiveness and appropriate configuration of the DR infrastructure	Suitability of DR service performance (as defined in the agreement)
Coordination of the technical recovery teams	Business users results during end user service validation
Adherence to recovery procedures by technical staff	Business decision process to activate the DR services
Configuration of firewalls	Appropriate access to computing resources
Configuration of Storage Area Networks	Access to production data and verifying data integrity
Managing capacity of personnel and technology to meet RTO/RPO	Alignment of service delivery with business requirements

# DR Service Exercise Report

*The DR Exercise Report (not the DR Plan) is the most crucial artifact related to the DR exercise.*

The value of a DR Exercise report:

- Shows value for \$
- Demonstrates Continuous Service Improvement
- Lessens operational RISK and provides business reassurance
- Fulfills audit requirements

DR Exercise Report Outline:

- Scope and Scale of the DR Exercise, including Scenario
- Desired Objectives to be met
- Expected Outcomes
- Actual Outcomes
- Gaps Identified/Lessons Learned (Expected vs Actual)
- Action Plan to address gaps or apply lessons learned



# Current Challenges..

- ... with outsourced DR services and exercises:
- Cloud services can confound contracted DR services:
    - Vendors' underpinning sub-agreements with cloud providers
    - Interface and integration with legacy systems
    - Cloud providers are not adaptive to unique business needs
    - Cloud services may not be cheaper, but they provide increased DR performance *if configured correctly*
  - Force Majeure
    - The events for which vendors seek contractual relief are often the same events for which DR services are sought
  - Abstraction
    - “*Doveryai no Proveryai*” – Russian Proverb

# Sample DR Summary

4.2 The annual ICT DR Summary shall include the following in relation to the Disaster Recovery Plan and corresponding DR exercise:

- (a) List and brief description of key components, including subcontracted services and technology arrangements that underpin the Services defined in the DRP;
- (b) Clearly defined performance targets for the Services, including the RTOs, RPOs and capacity for that particular Service when the DRP is implemented;
- (c) Description of minimum performance or limitations of the Services when the DRP is activated that may differ from the original production services;
- (d) List of failure points or disaster scenarios for which the Disaster Recovery Plan may be activated;
- (e) Acknowledgement that key resources, staff and technical and subcontracted arrangements that enable the recovery and subsequent restoration of the Services are defined in the DRP and are in place.
- (f) *Summary of predefined objectives for the vendor's annual DRP exercise as they relate to the Services;*
- (g) *Summary of the outcome of the annual DRP exercise as it relates to the objectives;*
- (h) *List and description of the measures, if any, being taken by vendor or its subcontractors to mitigate gaps or issues encountered during the exercise, timeframes for remediation and subsequent updates to the DRP.*

# Thank you!

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